

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of synthesizing automatically composing a media article, said method comprising:

automatically reading digital metadata associated with a first set of stored media data, which digital metadata includes:

related set identity data identifying a second set of stored media data; and

relationship data which indicates the relationship between what is represented by the first set of stored media data and what is represented by the second set of stored media data; and ~~whether the user is to see or hear what is represented by the first set of stored media data before or after he sees or hears what is represented by the second set of stored media data;~~

automatically synthesizing said media article, said automatic synthesis including arranging said first and second sets of stored media data or identifiers thereof in said media article in accordance with said relationship data; and

storing or outputting said media article. ~~synthesizing and storing or outputting said media article with said first and second sets of stored media data being arranged accordingly.~~

2. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1 further comprising generating said related set identity data and said relationship data.

3. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 wherein said metadata further comprises content data indicating what is represented by said sets of stored media data, said method further comprising:

automatically selecting, from said plurality of sets of stored media data, one or more selected sets of stored media data in dependence upon said content data.

4. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 3 comprising:
making a plurality of such automatic selections ; and
automatically concatenating the results of said selections.

Claim 5 (Canceled).

6. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1 in which said set of stored media data contains video data.

7. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for the automatic composition of media articles ~~articles, said apparatus comprising:~~

one or more memory devices storing, for each of a plurality of sets of stored media data including first and second sets of stored media data, metadata which at least for said first set of media data includes:

- i) related set identify data identifying a second set of stored media data; and
- ii) relationship data indicating one or more relationships between the content represented in said set of stored media data and the content represented in one or more other sets of stored media data; ~~which indicates whether the user is to see or hear what is represented by the first set of stored media data before or after he sees or hears what is represented by the second set of stored media data; and~~

one or more digital processors in communication with said one or more memory devices and arranged in operation to automatically read said metadata and to automatically synthesize ~~compose~~ a media article, said automatic synthesis including by

arranging said first and second sets of stored media data or identifiers thereof in accordance with said relationship data read from said metadata.

8. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 7 in which said relationship data indicates a causal relationship between what is represented by one of said sets of stored media data and what is represented by another of said sets of stored media data.

9. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 7 wherein said one or more processors is further arranged in operation to provide a user with an interface enabling the user to enter said relationship data.

10. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 9 wherein:
said metadata is stored in a database; and
said one or more processors are further arranged in operation to query said database to obtain identifiers of sets of stored media data whose metadata meets one or more conditions specified in said query.

11. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 10 in which said database comprises an object-oriented database and metadata for each set of stored media data is stored as an object in said object-oriented database.

12. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 11 in which said relationship data is stored as data which defines the relationships between objects in the database.

13. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 12 in which membership in a set is indicated by each member of the set inheriting from a container object.

14. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 7 further comprising a content store storing a plurality of sets of stored media data, said metadata for each set of stored media data including a pointer to the location of said set of stored media data in said content store.

15. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 7 wherein:
said one or more memories further store one or more media element selection criteria; and
said one or more processors are further arranged in operation to receive a set of media element identifiers and to select said input set by automatically selecting a subset of media element identifiers in accordance with said selection criteria.

16. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 15 wherein:
said one or more media element selection criteria comprise a set of template data, each of said sets of template data listing a plurality of slots to be filled, and, for each slot, one or more associated requirements of media elements for filling said slot ;
and

said one or more processors are further arranged in operation to provide said subset by, for each of said slots, automatically retrieving one or more identifiers of media elements whose metadata accords with said one or more requirements for said slots.

17. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 7 wherein said sets of stored media data comprise video data.

18. (New) A method according to claim 1 wherein said arranging step arranges said sets of stored media data so as to determine whether the user sees or hears what is represented by the first set of stored media data before or after he sees or hears what is represented by the second set of stored media.

19. (New) A method according to claim 2 wherein said arranging step arranges said sets of stored media data so as to determine whether the user sees or hears what is represented by the first set of stored media data before or after he sees or hears what is represented by the second set of stored media.

20. (New) A method according to claim 3 wherein said arranging step arranges said sets of stored media data so as to determine whether the user sees or hears what is represented by the first set of stored media data before or after he sees or hears what is represented by the second set of stored media.

21. (New) A method according to claim 4 wherein said arranging step arranges said sets of stored media data so as to determine whether the user sees or hears what is represented by the first set of stored media data before or after he sees or hears what is represented by the second set of stored media.